United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1236
29 September 1992

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees urges rapid deployment of additional peace-keeping troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina; two United Nations helicopters fired upon yesterday by anti-aircraft artillery in Zagreb.

+ President of Republic of Yugoslavia and President of Croatia to meet in Geneva, tomorrow, 30 September, to begin talks on resolving outstanding problems between the two countries.

+ Bosnia and Herzegovina launches urgent appeal to Security Council for right to self-defence, warning that Sarajevo is about to face "final assault".

+ Angola's first multi-party elections began today; Secretary-General's Special Representative Margaret J. Anstee urges continued demonstration of leadership, restraint and tolerance by political leaders to ensure successful outcome.

+ Presidents of Panama and Haiti address General Assembly; statements also delivered by Foreign Ministers of Ukraine, Bahrain, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Bangladesh, Estonia and Saudi Arabia; by Chairman of delegation of Peru; Assembly last night heard statements by Cuba, Singapore, Benin, Costa Rica and Nepal.

+ Haitian President calls for United Nations/Organization of American States joint mission to compel Haitian military to accept democracy.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, has urged States to speed up deployment of international peace-keeping troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying the presence of the soldiers of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) would help contain a number of abuses presently being witnessed by UNHCR staff, the Agency said today.

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In a letter to Governments, Mrs. Ogata said only quick action by the international community could "prevent the further deterioration of an already terrible situation". The latest information from Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed to stepping up of 'ethnic cleansing', she said, especially in the Banja-Luka area where large numbers of people were being forced out of their homes and villages and pushed across the front lines towards central Bosnia.

The deployment of up to 6,000 additional UNPROFOR troops was authorized on 14 September by the Security Council, but some nations contributing to the peace-keeping force have said it could be several more weeks before they were actually deployed in the region.

In a related development, two United Nations helicopters were fired upon yesterday by anti-aircraft artillery near Zagreb airport, north-east of Zagreb, while en route from Dubrava to Zagreb. The two pilots landed their craft safely at Zagreb airport, with no damage and no casualties.

According to a press release made available at Headquarters, both helicopters were displaying navigational lights and their transponder code, a signal which identifies them as UNPROFOR aircraft, was in operation. Both helicopters were clearly marked as United Nations craft, and their flight was strictly in accordance with procedures of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Croatian rules of the air and with the specific agreement between Croatian authorities and UNPROFOR, which "guarantees the safety and security of UNPROFOR flights over Croatia".

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The two Co-chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, announced today that President Dobrica Cosic of the Republic of Yugoslavia and President Franjo Tudjman of the Republic of Croatia have agreed to meet in Geneva tomorrow, 30 September, to begin talks on resolving outstanding problems between the two countries.

According to a statement issued in Geneva, the Co-chairmen were scheduled to meet with President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina this morning.

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The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has sent an urgent appeal to the United Nations Security Council warning that Sarajevo is about to face what is likely to be the "final assault on the city".

The Acting Bosnian President, Ejup Ganic, wrote in a letter to the Council President, dated 25 September, that there was "an imminent danger" that Sarajevo would "be unable to stand under the force of aggression" by Serbia and Montenegro, unless the international community decided to lift the arms embargo and allowed the Bosnian people to defend itself.

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The letter said reports were reaching Sarajevo of "a massive troop and arms influx from Serbia and Montenegro along the eastern border of the country ... burning and destroying everything in their way, and displacing the local non-Serb population". The aggressor was "transferring all of its available manpower and weaponry across the border before the international observers were deployed along that border".

Mr. Ganic said that because of the arms embargo, Bosnia was not able to defend itself, and yet no one was coming to Bosnia's defence. "The arms embargo against Bosnia must be lifted", he said.
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The actual voting in Angola's multi-party election began today after the conclusion of a successful campaign by the candidates.

In a statement issued yesterday in Luanda, Margaret J. Anstee, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, urged a further demonstration of leadership, restraint and tolerance by the leaders of the major parties, saying it was essential that all political parties now pledge themselves to respect the results of the elections, as verified by the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), and to build a new republic in peace and harmony.

Mrs. Anstee went on to say that Angola was to be congratulated for maintaining its cease-fire for 15 months and for its impressive success in registering the great majority of its adult population for the presidential and legislative elections, under such difficult conditions.

Mrs. Anstee also stressed that some political leaders had expressed concern over the slow progress in the demobilization process and in the establishment of the New Angolan Armed Forces. But the joint communiqué by President dos Santos and Dr. Savimbi and a declaration on the disbandment of FAPLA and FALA would help alleviate those concerns, she said.

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Opening today's debate in the General Assembly, President Guillermo Endara Galimany, President of Panama, said his country was laying the foundation for agreements to benefit the six countries of the Isthmus. An agenda had been agreed upon by those countries to strengthen the idea of a united Central America. He indicated the Presidents of the region had decided to place emphasis on the agricultural sector at their forthcoming Summit Conference, to be held in Panama.

President Endara also stressed that the geographic position of Panama and its service economy had attracted a large segment of the drug trade to the country. His Government was carrying out a number of programmes to attack the problem, he explained.

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President Endara recalled that his country would assume management of the Panama Canal at the end of the century. The authorities had already drawn up the legal framework for the utilization of the many improvements undertaken by the United States in connection with the Canal, and a commission made up of the United States, Japan and Panama was studying alternatives to aid in the use of the Canal in the future.

Ukraine, which suffered to the fullest extent from the aftermath of Chernobyl catastrophe, was ever more vigorous in supporting the international campaign for the complete ban on nuclear testing, Anatoly Zlenko, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, told the Assembly this morning. He reiterated his country's intention to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place all its nuclear power plants and all fissionable materials under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards. Mr. Zlenko also stressed that his Government actively supported the idea of creating a nuclear-free zone in the Black Sea bassin.

Turning to the field of human rights, the Foreign Minister expressed concern at the "discriminatory practices" against Ukrainians and all other non-indigenous nationalities that are being pursued, he said, in some new States that emerged on the territory of the former Soviet Union. He expressed the hope that all countries where Ukrainians reside would demonstrate genuine consideration and concerned attitude to their cultural, language and religious needs.

Bahrain had been following with deep concern the recent "unfortunate developments" in the Gulf area as a result of actions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the island of Abu Mousa, Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, said this morning. While emphasizing the sovereignty and territorial rights of the United Arab Emirates and reiterating his Government's adherence to the good neighborhood principle -- with a view to seeking to free the area from any other tension -- the Foreign Minister called upon the Government of Iran to respect the memorandum of understanding which it had signed with the United Arab Emirates.

Speaking about the situation in the Middle East, Mr. Al Khalifa stressed that international efforts should be intensified to induce Israel to forswear its policies of expansion and settlement building in Arab territories, to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to withdraw from southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425. He also expressed Bahrain's support for declaring the Middle East region free of all weapons of mass destruction and its readiness to deal with the proposed Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Foreign Minister of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Yong Nam, this morning accused the United States of pursuing a policy of "power politics based on the Cold War way of thinking" on the Korean peninsula. He told the Assembly that the presence of United States troops in South Korea was clear evidence of foreign interference and was "impeding a solution" to the question of Korean reunification. There was no justification for such a military presence in South Korea, he said, adding that the United States had

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continued to justify the stationing of its armed forces by arguing that a "power vacuum" would be created. The key issue in realizing reunification of the Korean peninsula was to end foreign interference in the Korean question", he said.

The Foreign Minister also said that the North-South Agreement had shown that both North and South Korea wanted a single unified State. He said he was optimistic about the prospect of dialogue on reunification, despite a series of obstacles and difficulties.

Turning to the nuclear issue, he said the "nuclear suspicion" that remained unresolved stemmed from the deployment of United States nuclear weapons in South Korea. Withdrawal of those weapons was therefore fundamental to resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. North Korea had made it clear that it had no nuclear weapons and no intention nor capacity to make them, he said.

Referring to the "difficult and sensitive stage" in the formation of his country, Kholiknazarzoda Khudoberdi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, spoke of his country's deepening economic crisis which had led to estimated losses of more than 10 billion roubles, and called upon international humanitarian organizations to send emergency relief assistance and food supplies to Tajikistan as soon as possible. He also appealed for support in ensuring that the system of democracy, chosen by the Tajik people for their country's new development, prevails. A relapse to communist dictatorship was impossible, he said, as the people of Tajikistan were against any totalitarian regime. However, he also expressed concern that the critical stage of the country's economy could lead it off its chosen course.

He attributed the present political unrest and tension to "the former government's attempts to break certain regulations concerning the freedom of the media and human rights", and defended his country's relations with Iran and Afghanistan - two neighbouring Muslim countries - saying that they constituted "a single cultural, ethnic and lingual unit". At the same time, Tajikistan greatly valued friendly relations with all States, he noted, adding that Tajikistan's hydro-power, agriculture and mining industry offered great potential for cooperation with European countries.

The crisis in Peru had become extreme because of terrorism and the dire economic situation of the country, and went well beyond a simple conflict between indigenous peoples and descendants of Spanish settlers, the Chief of Delegation of Peru, Ricardo Luna, explained this morning. Peru had begun an economic recovery programme, and had recently captured leaders of the "Shining Path" terrorist group. The institutions of the country, including a modern parliament and an efficient system of justice, could only help the authorities deal with the new realities. Moreover, he said, Peru would rely on the support of other countries. His Government's request for international observers for the upcoming constituent elections demonstrated its approach to the situation, he noted.

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Mr. Luna also called for a developing of the regional action in economic development, prevention of conflict and peace-keeping. The Organization of the American States (OAS), he said, must be strengthened and move beyond simply ostracizing certain States. Peru shared the position of Ecuator to promote joint development between the two countries, as demonstrated by recent meetings between the Heads of State of both countries.

Outlining his "8 democratic beatitudes for a civilization of peace" in the General Assembly today, the President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, appealed to the international community to "make itself responsible for a progressive civilization of peace". The advent of a civilization of peace worldwide involved restoring constitutional order to Haiti, he said, "where blood is flowing, corpses are being heaped up and repression is being intensified". Never before, he said, had Haiti had such a ferocious dictatorship imposed on it.

The Haitian President denounced the present leadership in his country and called for Haiti's liberation from the army. The army should be disbanded and its members given professional and vocational training, and a police force, separate from the army should be established, he suggested. The President also expressed support for "a real, total and complete embargo" against Haiti and called for an end to the flood of new weapons being shipped continually into Haiti. If a total blockade was necessary, he said, the Haitian people would welcome it.

The Haitian President pleaded for the return of peace to Haiti. The condemnation of the coup d'Etat of 30 September 1991 by the United Nations was an expression of the desire of the Organization to defend the democratic principles and rights of the Haitian people, he said.

The exodus of Myanmar refugees to Bangladesh since November 1991 had imposed a heavy additional burden on the Government of that country, in the wake of the devastating cyclone of May, 1991, Mostafizur Rahman, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, told the Assembly this afternoon. In spite of a mutual agreement of last March, he said, some 270,000 Myanmar refugees still remained in Bangladesh as efforts continued to repatriate them "in honour, safety and dignity, and, above all, on a voluntary basis". The critical catalyst for guaranteeing safe repatriation and resettlement remained an impartial United Nations presence and efforts continued to overcome Myanmar's reticence on this score, he explained. Already, some 49 refugees had returned voluntarily to their country last week, he said, expressing the hope that first step would be followed by a massive voluntary return of the remaining refugees.

Speaking about regional cooperation, Mr. Rahman stressed that his Government had initiated concerted steps to bolster "a new chapter of positive interaction with Bangladesh's immediate neigbour, following years of negativity". Recent official visits by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan had been solely motivated, he said, "to eschew past

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inhibitions and look to the future". Some issues -- especially with India -- remained complex and sensitive, but approaches to solutions were being forged through continuing and pragmatic dialogue, he said.

Recalling the signing of a treaty between Estonia and the Russian Federation in January 1991, in which both States recognized each other as independent and sovereign, Mr.Jaan Manitski, Foreign Minister of Estonia, expressed his concern over some Russian political views that Estonia should not be considered separate from Russia.

Some wished to preserve a Russian military presence at any cost, he noted, and to bind Estonia as a satellite to the Russian Federation through an international campaign which demanded Estonian citizenship for Russian citizens, while retaining Russia's right to be their guardian and protector. That is why, he explained, Estonia was presenting a resolution to the General Assembly on the unconditional withdrawal of foreign military troops from the Baltic States.

The Iraqi regime had recently been returning to the pattern of threats and false claims regarding Kuwait in a manner similar to that pursued on the eve of its aggression against that nation, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, noted today. This made a mockery of Iraq's obligations under international treaties and resolutions, he said. The only means for avoiding instability in the region and dealing with the suffering of the people of Iraq lay, first and foremost, in ensuring the complete and comprehensive implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council which reflect "the collective will of the international community".

The Saudi Foreign Minister also expressed his Government's support for the position taken by the United Arab Emirates over its sovereignty over the three islands of Abu Musa, Tumb and Greater Tumb. Saudi Arabia, he said, believed that the dispute with Iran could be settled through negotiations and the resort to international law and international legitimacy.

Turning to the Middle East situation, Prince Saud Al-Faisal said genuine peace in the area could not be achieved without a permanent and just solution to the Palestinian question and an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

The Saudi Foreign Minister also appealed to the international community to help facilitate the establishment of an international fund to assist Lebanon in strengthening its legal authority and to contribute to the process of reconstruction in that country.

Speaking last night, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, said those who had exulted over the failure of certain socialist societies should be capable of demonstrating that capitalism could solve the problems of humanity. In two centuries of capitalism, the most powerful country had not been able to solve the social problems of health care, education and housing or the social ills of violence and racism.

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Mr. de Quesada went on to say that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against the Cuban people had been in force for more than 30 years and was now being intensified and broadened. Never before, he said, had a people been attacked, without the existence of war, in such a rigorous, prolonged and total manner. Moreover, he said, the blockade was being intensified as Cuba was suffering an extremely difficult economic situation derived from the dissolution of the socialist bloc and the radical change of its links with the countries with which it maintained 80 per cent of its trade.

Wong Kan Seng, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, said yesterday that the "Agenda for Peace" had made it clear that the functions of United Nations peace-keepers had gone far beyond their usual mandate. In the past, United Nations peace-keepers were traditionally sent in after a peace agreement had been worked out between warring parties. Today, United Nations forces were involved in tasks ranging from election monitoring to inspection of nuclear installations. He proposed that the Organization and the Security Council play a more active role in preventive diplomacy, adding that it should work in concert with regional groupings.

The Foreign Minister also spoke of the major economic revolution taking place in the South and affecting the lives of billions of people, especially in large nations such as China, India, Pakistan and Indonesia. If present trends continued, by the year 2000, the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asian newly industrialized economies would have a gross domestic product (GDP) of $3.3 trillion, two-thirds of the United States 1990 GDP or half of the European Community 1990 GDP, he said.

Despite the progress made in international relations, greater economic cooperation between nations was needed today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, Theodore Holo, told the Assembly last night. The differences between the North and the South were increasing, and the situation in Africa, especially South of the Sahara, was more and more serious, he said. The question of the external debt ought to be addressed, because the heavy obligations of debt servicing were causing budgetary problems. Public investment and social expenditures had been seriously affected.

He appealed to the international community to take concrete steps to reduce the external debt of African countries and to increase their development assistance. Mr. Holo pointed out, however, that one year after the adoption of the new Programme of Action for African development, its implementation was not yet effective; the follow-up mechanisms had not yet been put in place; the study on the feasibility of creating a diversification fund for African commodities had not begun; and the provision of adequate financial resources was not yet a reality.

The world had lost interest in the problems of today's democratic and peaceful Central America", Bernd Niehaus-Quesada, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, said yesterday. He expressed regret that the cooperation which existed while Central America was in turmoil, had now decreased.

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During the 1980s, he went on, Central America had suffered a political and social crisis, marked by authoritarian goverments, guerrilla activity, arms proliferation and the destruction of infrastructures. Fortunately, today, democracy and political liberty reigned in the region, he said. Several national reconciliation processes were being developped and a vigorous economic effort was under way. However, it would be very difficult to solidify those advances if underdevelopment and poverty continued to exist.

Reminding the Assembly that the export of coffee and bananas, Central America's leading export products, was met with more obstacles, while financial aid was being reduced, Mr.Niehaus-Quesada said that despite the region's efforts to diversify its production, international markets were not open to it.

Addressing the Assembly yesterday, Mahesh Acharya, Minister for Finance of Nepal, said that as a least developed country, Nepal accepted the principal responsibility for its economic and social development. Its development policies were directed towards creating a basic infrastructure for development. Nepal considered it extremely important to raise the living conditions of its people; to raise the level of literacy; to improve basic health care; and to reduce infant mortality.

One of the most satisfying reforms during the past year had been in the area of coordination of humanitarian assistance, the Nepalese Minister said. He also expressed appreciation for the ongoing efforts to enable the Economic and Social Council to play the role envisioned in the Charter. Global economic and social development alone could constitute the lasting foundation of international peace and security, he said.

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At a press conference this afternoon, following his address to the General Assembly, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide reiterated his call for the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) "to work together on an urgent basis in Haiti, so that all the fine resolutions can be translated into fruitful action". By the joint effort, he said, the OAS should be able to find the means to compel the Haitian military to accept democracy.

Responding to questions from reporters on the relative lack of success by the OAS in Haiti a year after his removal from power, the Haitian President said he had been looking into ways of "injecting fresh dynamism into the process". He asserted that the situation in Haiti remained "a sombre picture where criminals were continuing to slaughter people and kill democracy".

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